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## HEADER

R 181002Z DEC 02 ZYB  
 FM **CDR JTF-FA** HONOLULU HI//J2//  
 TO RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC//ISA/DPMO//  
 INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP/ISA/DPMO//  
 RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC//CA/OCS/ACS/EAP/VLC//  
 RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J5//  
 RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC [REDACTED]  
 RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
 RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J32//  
 RUEKJCS/USCINCPAC LO WASHINGTON DC  
 RHMFISS [REDACTED]  
 RUHVAAA [REDACTED]  
 RUHVAAA/CDRUSACILHI HICKAM AFB HI//TAPC-PED-H//  
 RUEHBK/CJTFFA DET ONE BANGKOK TH  
 RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI//CJTFFA DET TWO//  
 RUEHVN/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE//CJTFFA DET THREE//  
 RHEFLGX/SAFE WASHINGTON DC  
 RHMFIUU/517AS ELMENDORF AFB AK//CC/DO//  
 RUHHHGA/517AS ELMENDORF AFB AK//CC/DO//  
 RUAHASB/36AS YOKOTA AB JA//CC/DO//  
 RUHEMAD/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI  
 RUHEMAD/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J3//  
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(b) (3)

OASD DPMO	
Date Received <b>23 Dec 02</b>	
Watch Officer <b>R</b>	
Distro	Act / Info
Director	_____
Deputy Dir	_____
Chief of Staff	_____
Exec Asst	_____
Gen Counsel	_____
Pol/Plns	_____
Res/Analyst	_____
Jt Comm Spt	_____
Ref/DOC	_____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ext Affairs	_____
Resource Mgmt	_____
<b>Dwyer - Analyst</b>	_____
_____	_____
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y Bell, H. G. 1552  
 y Anderson, G. L.  
 y Prunett, W. D.  
 y Leaser, L. C.  
 y Shinn, W. C.

## CONTROLS

UNCLAS //N03460//

## BODY

MSGID/GENADMIN/**CDR JTF-FA**/ - /DEC//  
 SUBJ/DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION OF VIETNAM CASE 1552  
 CONDUCTED DURING THE 76TH JOINT FIELD ACTIVITY IN THE LAO  
 PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC//  
 AKNLDG/COMMENTS IN THIS REPORT ARE BASED ON FIELD ANALYSIS AND  
 ARE NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE FINAL ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS.//

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Reviewed by DPMO  
 IAW 50 USC 435 Note & DOD 5400.7-R  
 Date: 15-Apr-2003 Initialed By: S. F.

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REF/A/RMG/CDR JTF-FA/262034ZOCT00//

REF/B/DOC/1:50,000 SCALE MAP//

NARR/REFERENCES.

A. REF A IS THE DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION OF CASE 1552 CONDUCTED DURING THE 62ND JOINT FIELD ACTIVITY IN SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.

B. MAP DATA: NAME: HUONG KHE; SHEET: 6145-III; SERIES: L7014; EDITION: 2-AMS.//  
RMKS/1. SUMMARY.

A. CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS: ON 28 JANUARY 1970, THE SIX-MAN CREW OF A HH-53B JOLLY GREEN GIANT HELICOPTER WAS SUPPORTING A SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) OPERATION FOR A DOWNED F-105 CREWMEMBER IN NORTHERN VIETNAM. PRIOR TO ENTERING THE SAR AREA, THE HELICOPTERS WERE REFUELING FROM A TANKER. THE HELICOPTER WAS AT AN ALTITUDE OF APPROXIMATELY 7,000 FEET ABOVE THE TERRAIN WAITING TO REFUEL WHEN IT WAS HIT BY A MISSILE FIRED BY A NORTH VIETNAMESE MIG-21 AIRCRAFT. THE AIRCRAFT EXPLODED IN FLIGHT AND BROKE INTO SEVERAL PIECES. NO SAR EFFORT WAS MADE. IN APRIL 1988, THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (SRV) REPATRIATED REMAINS ASSOCIATED WITH CASE 1552. THE ARMED FORCES IDENTIFICATION REVIEW BOARD SUBSEQUENTLY IDENTIFIED THESE REMAINS AS THE PILOT; FIVE INDIVIDUALS REMAIN UNACCOUNTED FOR IN THE INCIDENT.

B. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION: ON 14 AND 15 NOVEMBER 2002, DURING THE 76TH JOINT FIELD ACTIVITY (JFA), THE INVESTIGATION ELEMENT (IE) INVESTIGATED, LOCATED AND SURVEYED THE CASE 1552 CRASH SITE IN NAKAI DISTRICT, KHAMMOUAN PROVINCE, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LPDR).

C. REMAINS/PERSONAL EFFECTS: THE IE DID NOT RECOVER OR RECEIVE ANY REMAINS OR PERSONAL EFFECTS WHILE INVESTIGATING VIETNAM CASE 1552.

2. DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION.

A. PURPOSE:

(1) IN NAKAY DISTRICT, KHAMMOUAN PROVINCE, CLEAR A LANDING ZONE FOR A TRILATERAL INVESTIGATION. INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBLE CRASH SITE AND IF NOT FOUND, CONDUCT A TRILATERAL INVESTIGATION OF CASE 1552 WITH VIETNAMESE WITNESS MR. NGUYEN MINH LE (NGUYEENX MINH LEEJ).

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(A) CLEAR A LANDING ZONE IN PREPARATION FOR A TRILATERAL INVESTIGATION WITH MR. LE. (ACCOMPLISHED; SEE PARA 2.F., BELOW.)

(B) WHILE CLEARING LANDING ZONE, INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE CRASH SITE LOCATION (48Q WE 574 963). CONDUCT A DETAILED SURVEY OF SITE. (NOT ATTEMPTED; SEE PARA 2.F. AND 2.G., BELOW.)

(2) IF CASE CRASH SITE NOT LOCATED SOLELY BY IE, TAKE MR. LE TO THE SMALL HILLTOP (WE 574 963), WHICH WAS DISCOVERED WHILE CONDUCTING AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE ON THE 73RD JFA (02-3L) IN THE LPDR.

(A) IF HE IS UNABLE TO LOCATE THE CRASH SITE, TAKE HIM TO THE AREA OF THE STREAM JUNCTION (WE 576 965), WHICH WAS DISCOVERED WHILE CONDUCTING AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE ON THE 73RD JFA (02-3L) IN THE LPDR AND HAVE HIM GUIDE THE TEAM TO THE CRASH SITE FROM THIS LOCATION. (ACCOMPLISHED; SEE PARA 2.F. AND 2.G., BELOW.)

(B) IF HE IS UNABLE TO LOCATE THE CRASH SITE, TAKE HIM TO THE AREA OF BORDER POST 575 (APPROXIMATELY WF 618 005) AND HAVE HIM GUIDE THE TEAM TO THE CRASH SITE FROM THIS LOCATION. (NOT ATTEMPTED; SEE PARA 2.F. AND 2.G., BELOW.)

(3) CONDUCT A DETAILED SURVEY OF BOTH WRECKAGE AREAS KNOWN TO THE WITNESS. (ACCOMPLISHED; SEE PARA 2.F. AND 2.G., BELOW.)

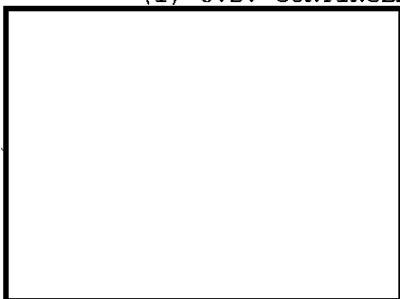
(b) (3)

B. ON 14 NOVEMBER 2002, THE IE ARRIVED IN THAKHEK DISTRICT TOWN (48Q VE 850 201) TO CONTINUE THE INVESTIGATION OF 21 CASES.

(b) (6)

C. TEAM COMPOSITION:

(1) U.S. CONTINGENT:



TEAM LEADER  
ASSISTANT TEAM LEADER  
LINGUIST  
LINGUIST  
CHIEF, CASUALTY RESOLUTION  
ANALYST  
ANALYST  
TEAM MEDIC  
LIFE SUPPORT ANALYST (LSA)  
EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE

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DISPOSAL (EOD) TECHNICIAN

## (2) LPDR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT:

MAJ SANGKHOM CHALEUNSAK

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL  
DEFENSE

MR. SOMCHIT SRITHIRATH

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS

## (3) PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT CONTINGENT:

MR. BOUNPOUD DANGCHAMPA

KHAMMOUAN PROVINCE OFFICIAL

MR. KHAMTHU

KHAMMOUAN PROVINCE OFFICIAL

MR. LAKI KEOKADANG

NAKAI DISTRICT OFFICIAL

MR. KHAMPEUN SENGCHANYA

NAKAI DISTRICT OFFICIAL

## (4) VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT:

MR. DUONG VAN NGOC

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MR. PHAM VAN THAI

MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

MR. NGUYEN NGOC THO

MINISTRY OF SECURITY

D. ON 9 NOVEMBER 2002, THE IE MET WITH THE LPDR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT, WHICH APPROVED THE INVESTIGATION PLAN FOR VIETNAM CASE 1552, IN NAKAI DISTRICT, KHAMMOUAN PROVINCE.

E. ON 10 NOVEMBER 2002, THE IE FLEW TO DEN SAVAN-LAO BAO, (LPDR-SRV BORDER CROSSING) (XD 688 383) TO PICK UP THE VIETNAMESE DELEGATION AND THE TRI-LATERAL WITNESS FOR CASE 1552.

F. ON 14 NOVEMBER 2002, THE TEAM FLEW TO A STAGING AREA (WE 5883 8358) AND CONDUCTED AN AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE WITH THE WITNESS. THE TEAM IDENTIFIED A LANDING ZONE (LZ) AT A STREAM JUNCTION (WE 5892 9512) FROM WHERE THE WITNESS WAS ABLE TO ORIENT HIMSELF. THE TEAM INSERTED AND MOVED UPSTREAM ALONG THE LEFT FORK FROM THE LZ. APPROXIMATELY 100 METERS UPSTREAM THE WITNESS IDENTIFIED AN ENCAMPMENT (WE 5885 9520) HE PREVIOUSLY USED WHILE HUNTING IN THE AREA. FROM THIS AREA THE WITNESS BELIEVED THE CRASH SITE WAS A THIRTY-MINUTE WALK UPHILL (WEST). DUE TO THE LATE HOUR OF THE DAY THE TEAM HAD TO RETURN TO THE LZ.

G. ON 15 NOVEMBER 2002, THE TEAM RETURNED TO THE LZ (WE 5892 9512) AND MOVED TO THE ENCAMPMENT AREA PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED BY THE WITNESS. THE TEAM FOLLOWED THE WITNESS UP A RIDGE TO THE MAIN RIDGE RUNNING WEST AT VICINITY OF WE 587 951. THE WITNESS LED THE TEAM ALONG THE RIDGE LINE INVESTIGATING NUMEROUS SPURS TO THE NORTH. THE TEAM IDENTIFIED TWO SMALL ISOLATED AREAS OF

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WRECKAGE (WE 580 953 AND WE 578 952); PROBABLY LEFT BY SCAVENGERS DUE TO THEIR CLOSE VICINITY TO SMALL ENCAMPMENTS. THE TEAM CONTINUED TO TRAVEL WEST ALONG THE RIDGE AND FOUND AN AIRCRAFT TIRE AT WE 575 949. FROM THIS LOCATION THE WITNESS LED THE TEAM NORTHWEST ALONG THE RIDGE TO THE MAIN WRECKAGE FIELD (WE 57369 95063). THE IE CONDUCTED A GROUND SEARCH OF THE IMMEDIATE AREA AND A DETAILED SURVEY OF THE CRASH SITE. THE TEAM IDENTIFIED AND RECOVERED WRECKAGE THAT SPECIFICALLY CORRELATED TO THE CASE 1552 AIRCRAFT (SEE 3.A.(2), BELOW), AND NUMEROUS PIECES OF SURVIVAL VEST IN TWO DIFFERENT LOCATIONS (FIRST LOCATION: MULTIPLE LARGE PIECES OF VEST IN THE MAIN WRECKAGE FIELD; SECOND LOCATION: SMALL PIECES RECOVERED 153-FEET AT 320 DEGREES FROM THE MAIN WRECKAGE FIELD, WITHIN 10 FEET OF THE TAIL ROTOR).

## 3. MATERIAL EVIDENCE.

## A. AIRCREW RELATED ITEMS RETAINED BY JTF-FA:

- (1) MULTIPLE PIECES OF SURVIVAL VEST.
- (2) "D" RING WITH WEBBING.
- (3) CANOPY RELEASE HARDWARE (FEMALE AND MALE HARDWARE

CONNECTED).

- (4) POSSIBLE PARACHUTE CONTAINER MATERIAL.
- (5) NAVIGATION MAP PIECE.

## B. AIRCRAFT RELATED ITEMS RETAINED BY JTF-FA:

- (1) UNIDENTIFIED WRECKAGE WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION STENCILED: AIR FORCE 1443.
- (2) TIE DOWN RING WITH PART NUMBER: 65208 04016-001.
- (3) UNIDENTIFIED WEBBING AND RESTRAINT BUCKLE.

## C. MATERIAL EVIDENCE PHOTOGRAPHED AND LEFT IN PLACE:

- (1) AIRCRAFT TIRE.
- (2) NUMEROUS PIECES OF UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE.

## D. REMAINS: NONE.

## 4. SITE SURVEY RESULTS:

## A. AREA DATA:

- (1) PROVINCE: KHAMMOUAN.
- (2) DISTRICT: NAKAI.
- (3) VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY: NONE.
- (4) VICINITY GPS GRID COORDINATES: MAIN WRECKAGE FIELD

OF THE AFT SECTION OF THE AIRCRAFT IS LOCATED AT 48Q WE 57369

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95063. THIS GRID WAS ACQUIRED USING A GARMIN 12XL, TRACKING FIVE SATELLITES, ON INDIA/THAI DATUM.

(5) VICINITY MAP GRID COORDINATES: MAIN WRECKAGE FIELD OF CRASH SITE IS LOCATED AT WE 5740 9515 BASED ON TERRAIN ASSOCIATION.

B. MAP DATA:

- (1) MAP NAME: HUONG KHE.
- (2) MAP SHEET: 6145-III.
- (3) MAP SERIES: L7014.
- (4) MAP EDITION: 2-AMS.
- (5) MAP DATUM: INDIA 1960.

C. SITE ACCESSIBILITY: CLOSEST LZ IS 1,500 METERS AWAY AND CAN SUPPORT ONE AS-350 HELICOPTER. A ROUGH TRAIL TO THE CRASH SITE EXISTS BUT IS NOT FEASIBLE FOR DAILY RECOVERY OPERATIONS. A CLOSER LZ WILL HAVE TO BE CUT IN ORDER TO SUPPORT A FUTURE EXCAVATION OF THE SITE.

D. SITE DESCRIPTION:

(1) TYPE OF SITE: CRASH SITE.

(2) DIMENSIONS: MAIN WRECKAGE FIELD IS APPROXIMATELY 30-X-30-METERS. HOWEVER, DEBRIS IS SCATTERED 50-100 METERS IN EVERY DIRECTION FROM THE MAIN DEBRIS FIELD. THE TEAM LOCATED SMALL ISOLATED PIECES OF WRECKAGE UP TO 400 METERS AWAY AND A DOOR MORE THAN A KILOMETER AWAY.

(3) SIGNIFICANT FEATURES:

- (A) DISTANCE TO NEAREST ROAD: NONE.
- (B) NEAREST POPULATED AREA: NONE.
- (C) SITE SENSITIVITY: NONE.
- (D) MAJOR TERRAIN FEATURES:

((1)) SITE IS LOCATED ON NEARLY FLAT TERRAIN NEAR THE PEAK OF A LARGE MOUNTAIN.

((2)) MAIN WRECKAGE FIELD LOCATED AT WE 57369 95063, (GRID ACQUIRED USING INDIA/THAI DATUM TRACKING FIVE SATELLITES). SECONDARY LARGE DEBRIS FIELD IS 153-FEET AT 320 DEGREES FROM MAIN WRECKAGE FIELD. TERTIARY LARGE WRECKAGE LOCATED 100 FEET AT 10 DEGREES FROM THE MAIN WRECKAGE FIELD. LIFE SUPPORT (NUMEROUS PIECES OF SURVIVAL VEST) WAS FOUND IN THE MAIN DEBRIS FIELD AND THE SECONDARY DEBRIS FIELD. THE SITE IS

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LOCATED ALONG A TRAIL THAT IS TRAVELED OFTEN BY HUNTERS.

E. LANDING ZONE RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) LOCATION: 48Q WE 58917 95117.
- (2) DISTANCE TO SITE: 1,500 METERS.
- (3) DISTANCE TO BASE CAMP: 35 MILES.
- (4) CONSIDERATIONS: THE SITE IS EXTREMELY REMOTE AND WILL HAVE TO HAVE A CLOSER LZ CUT TO SUPPORT A FUTURE RECOVERY OPERATION.

F. BASE CAMP RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) LOCATION: BASE CAMP ON SITE.
- (2) DISTANCE TO SITE: ON SITE.
- (3) WATER SOURCE AVAILABILITY: DELIVERED BY HELICOPTER.
- (4) HOTEL AVAILABILITY: THERE ARE NO HOTELS OR GUEST HOUSES IN NAKAI DISTRICT TOWN. RECOMMEND THE TEAM SET UP BASE CAMP ON SITE.

G. REMAINS FOUND AT SITE: NONE.

H. ESTIMATED EXCAVATION REQUIREMENTS:

- (1) NUMBER OF DAYS: 30 DAYS.
- (2) NUMBER OF WORKERS: TWO RECOVERY TEAMS.
- (3) SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: NONE.

I. WATER SOURCE: NONE. SITE MUST BE DRY SCREENED, BEST AT PEAK OF DRY SEASON (DECEMBER THROUGH MARCH).

J. TERRAIN AND WEATHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- (1) EFFECT OF WEATHER: SITE IS ONLY ACCESSIBLE BETWEEN NOVEMBER AND MARCH DUE TO LOW CLOUDS, HIGH WINDS AND TYPICAL MONSOON SEASON WEATHER.
- (2) SLOPE: MAIN WRECKAGE FIELD IS ON 5-DEGREE SLOPE BUT SPANS OUT TO SLOPES OF 45 DEGREES OR MORE.
- (3) VEGETATION: SITE IS LOCATED AMONG MANY LARGE TREES WITH SMALL SHRUBS AND TREES SPARSELY COVERING THE AREA.
- (4) SOIL: SANDY LOAM WITH NO ROCKS.

K. SAFETY:

- (1) UXO HAZARD: NONE.
- (2) TERRAIN: NONE.
- (3) WILDLIFE: THE WITNESS INFORMED THE TEAM THAT THERE ARE MANY TIGERS IN THE AREA OF THE CRASH SITE.

5. PERTINENT LOCATION OR DATA CHANGES: RECOMMEND CHANGING THE

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REPORT OF LOSS LOCATION FROM 48Q WF 582 048, HUONG KHE DISTRICT, HA TINH PROVINCE, SRV TO GRID COORDINATES 48Q WE 57369 95063, NAKAI DISTRICT, KHAMMOUAN PROVINCE, LPDR BASED ON THE EXCLUSIVE CORRELATION OF THE AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE AND LIFE SUPPORT ITEMS TO THE CASE 1552 AIRCRAFT.

## 6. ANALYST COMMENTS.

A. THE TEAM COMPARED GPS GRIDS USING DIFFERENT DATUMS AND IDENTIFIED MAP DATUM INDIA/THAI AS BEING THE MOST ACCURATE. COMPARING THE GPS READING TO A STREAM JUNCTION ON THE MAP, THE GRID IS LESS THAN 20 METERS OFF.

B. THE TEAM DID NOT LOCATE THE MAIN ROTOR ASSEMBLY OF THE HELICOPTER, WHICH WOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORWARD PORTION OF THE AIRCRAFT. DUE TO ITS WEIGHT, IT IS EXTREMELY DOUBTFUL THE ROTOR ASSEMBLY WOULD HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE SITE. FIELD ANALYSIS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY MR. LE HUU THUC (LEE HWUX THWCS) IN 2000 INDICATE HE PHOTOGRAPHED A SEPARATE WRECKAGE FIELD FROM THAT IDENTIFIED BY THE IE. THE AIRCRAFT WAS SHOT AT 8,000 FEET, BROKE IN HALF, AND IS PRESUMABLY IN TWO MAIN WRECKAGE CONCENTRATIONS. THE WRECKAGE PHOTOGRAPHED BY MR. LE MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORWARD SECTION OF THE HELICOPTER, WHICH WAS NOT LOCATED DURING THIS JFA.

C. LIFE SUPPORT ANALYST COMMENTS: PRELIMINARY FIELD ANALYSIS OF THE SURVIVAL VEST PIECES INDICATES AT LEAST ONE INDIVIDUAL WAS IN THE AIRCRAFT AT THE TIME OF IMPACT. THE TIE DOWN RING PART NUMBER IS CONSISTENT WITH THE HH-53 SERIES AIRCRAFT. THE UNIDENTIFIED METAL WITH "AIR FORCE 1443" STENCILED EXCLUSIVELY CORRELATE THIS SITE TO CASE 1552 INCIDENT. THE AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBER FOR CASE 1552 IS 14434. NO OTHER HH-53 LOSSES ARE WITHIN 15 KILOMETERS OF GRID COORDINATES 48Q WE 5740 9515.

## 7. TEAM LEADER COMMENTS.

A. CONCUR WITH ANALYST COMMENTS IN PARAGRAPH 6.

B. HOST GOVERNMENT COOPERATION/SUPPORT: EXCELLENT AT ALL LEVELS. THE LAO TEAM MADE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS CASE WAS SUCCESSFUL THROUGH COORDINATION'S WITH THE VIETNAMESE DELEGATION AND DISPLAYING MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPORT OF THE IE'S INVESTIGATION PLAN.

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8. DETACHMENT COMMANDER'S COMMENTS. CONCUR WITH ANALYST  
COMMENTS IN PARAGRAPH 6 AND TEAM LEADER COMMENTS IN PARAGRAPH 7.//

ADMIN

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